Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, November 14, 1875, with transcript

Copy of letter from Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell to her son, Alexander Graham Bell November 14th, 75 Letter finished by Prof. Alexander Melville Bell P. O. Box 518 Brantford, Ont., Canada Home, November 14th, 75 (Prof. A. Graham Bell, Care of Mrs. Saunders, 292 Essex Street, Salem, Mass. U.S.) My dear Aleck,

Your welcome and satisfactory letter was received yesterday, and we feel quite grateful to Mabel for doing you so much good. We trust your arrangements will succeed to your utmost wish. We are all well here I am thankful to say, and your cousins are so habitually busy about one thing or another that they do not seem dull. It is well they have been used to a quiet home and do not miss the excitement of a town life. Your Uncle and Aunt have been in Toronto for two days. Your Father slept in Town during their absence, but came home yesterday before they returned. So we are ignorant as yet what news they bring of Charley. Papa and your Uncle read in Brantford on the 30th, of November. This is a very hum-drum note, for I have no letters to record, no callers to name, and have not been out since I wrote last. Last night was very wild and stormy with a heavy fall of snow, consequently no one has left the house today. Some of us have been dozing over our books and resting, in readiness for a fresh start tomorrow morning. Papa will finish this. Give our united love to Mabel, and with fond love to yourself, I am,

Your ever affectionate Mother, E. G. Bell

My dear Al.,

A box of books was sent off to Mr. Burbank last Monday. I hope there will be no trouble about passing the Custom House. The box contained only six copies of the large V. S. so it may be necessary to send a larger supply. I shall wait however, to hear of the safe

arrival of the first 2 consignment. I am glad that you seem to have arrived at juster views of professional matters. I don't know what you refer to by “doing what you like with V. S.” I regret the changes you have already prematurely made. They might and should have been deferred for a new edition in which, as our joint work, all changes might have been made on full consideration by us both. One effect of your premature changes is to render a large analysis perfectly dead stock. You must explain what you want to do before I can give my consent. I shall be glad to do what I can to forward any well-considered plans, and to meet your wishes in reference to an examination of your class and so forth. But the old difficulty still remains of the alphabetic diversity you teach. To have gone on a similar errand last year would evidently have been idle. The whole proceeds of your class did not amount to more than my journey would have needlessly cost! I hope your class this season will fulfil your expectations.

You will be able to judge by Christmas, perhaps, whether my services will be desirable. G. B. should have acknowledged receipt of your letter at all events. It may have gone astray like your fire communication. You should ask if he has received it. Give my love to Mabel till I have the pleasure of carrying it personally. All here join in best love to you.

Your affectionate father, A. M. B. P.S. M. W. Himrod, Erie, Pa. writes to me (Nov. 9th): “Do you know of any one competent to take charge of a class of deaf-mutes, who uses your system of Visible Speech?” I have referred him to you for an answer. A.M.B.

Dynamite .

This useful explosive is composed of a mixture of 75 parts of nitro-glycerine absorbed by 25 parts of inert matter such as fine charcoal, silica, &c. It has the great advantage over nitro-glycerince, that it is not explosive by percussion. When ignited, unless it be closely confined, it burns off quietly and slowly, some nitrous acid being evolved; but when exploded, carbonic acid, nitrogen, and watery vapour alone are given off. Dynamite is four times the price of good gunpowder, but its explosive force is nearly eight times as

great, Another great advantage which dynamite possesses over gunpowder is that it is not influenced by damp; it consequently can be employed in wet grounds, where gunpowder would be utterly useless. Owing to this peculiar property of dynamite, after the cartridge has been placed in the boring prepared for it, it may be “tamped” with moist clay, sand, or even water, without fear of its missing fire. From some experiments made at Halifax, it appears that a 3oz. cartridge of dynamite was equal in explosive effect to 1 lb. of the best powder.— *English Mechanic* .

Herr Fuscher has recently discovered that if one volume of castor-oil be dissolved in two or three volumes of spirits of wine it will render paper transparent, and the spirit rapidly evaporating, the paper, in a few minutes becomes fit for use. A drawing in pencil or in Indian ink can thus be made, and if the paper is placed in spirits of wine, the oil is dissolved out, restoring the paper to its original condition.

Phœnician Traces in Sumatra .

At a meeting of the Anthropological Institute of London, on Dec. 22, Mr. J. Park Harrison exhibited tracings of late Phœnican characters from the south-west of the island of Sumatra. They are said to be still in use, and differ entirely from early letters in other parts of the island. The natives have a tradition that some descendants of Alexander the Great settled there; and if the second expedition of Nearchus—Alexander's Admiral—the account of which is lost, reached the Bay of Bengal, the date, Mr. Harrison considers, would agree sufficiently well with the letters. His sailors were principally Tyrians.

Origin oe the Art of Navigation .

At the same meeting Col. Lane Fox read a paper on early modes of navigation, in which he described the various contrivances employed by savage races for transit on the water. Commencing with the simple trunk canoe, the author traced the development of the art of boat and ship-building through the stages of stitched plank canoes, bark canoes, rafts, outrigger canoe, the variation of hull, sail, and gave the distribution of their many forms

and modifications. It was argued that the rude bark float of the Australians, the Tasmanian, and the Ethiopian, the catamaran of the Papaun, the dug-out canoe of the New Zealander, and the built-up canoe of the Samoan, were survivals representing successive stages in the development of the art of ship-building, not lapses to ruder methods of construction as the result of degradation; that each stage supplies us with examples of what at one time was the perfection of the art countless ages ago. Some of the more primitive kinds spread over nearly the whole world, whilst others had a more limited area of distribution. Taken together they enabled us to trace back the history of ship-building from the time of the earliest sculptures to the commencement of the art.